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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002504

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SUBJECT: IRAQI FM URGES P-5 AMBASSADORS FOR SUPPORT OF
GOI'S UN MOVE

REF: BAGHDAD 2492

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gary A. Grappo, for reasons
1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Iraqi FM Zebari summoned P-5 ambassadors to the MFA September 16 and pressed for support for the GOI's plans to call for a senior official, appointed by the UNSYG, to investigate the August 19 bombings and the broader issue of external support for terrorism in Iraq. Noting that he would begin soon with a fresh round of consultations on this issue at the opening session of UNGA, Zebari said he wanted to press the case first with ambassadors in Baghdad. Zebari recognized that the process would not be fast, but he insisted that the GOI needed the prospect of a tribunal "at the end of the road" as a deterrent against foreign intervention, especially in the critical upcoming 5-6 months.

In answer to a question, Zebari agreed that the senior official appointed by the UN "should not be UNAMI head Ad Melkert," given that he already has a full range of duties in Iraq. Zebari provided copies of a letter reiterating his call for a senior official, translation included in para. 7. End Summary.

GOI PREPARES FRESH PUSH ON UN MOVE

¶2. (C) Iraqi FM Hoshyar Zebari summoned P-5 ambassadors September 15 to brief them on developments in the GOI's efforts to involve the UNSC in investigating the August 19 bombings and the broader issue of external support for terrorism in Iraq. Zebari explained that the GOI was asking for a senior official appointed by the UNSYG to come to Baghdad to assess the situation and the level of foreign intervention. He expressed the hope that governments of P-5 members would support this call. Noting that he would begin soon with a fresh round of consultations on this issue at the opening session of UNGA, Zebari said he wanted to press the case first with ambassadors in Baghdad, in the hope that this would help shape the discussion in capitals and in New York. Dep Pol/C attended for the Embassy.

A PERIOD OF MAXIMUM DANGER

¶3. (C) Reiterating some of the themes he made September 14 with Pol M/C, reported reftel, Zebari recognized that the process would not be fast, but he insisted that the GOI needed the prospect of a tribunal "at the end of the road" as a deterrent against foreign intervention, especially in the critical upcoming 5-6 months. The GOI would continue with the bilateral track, and with mediation from Turkey and the Arab League, but it would not withdraw its appeal for UN assistance, reported Zebari. UN involvement -- signaling the scrutiny of the international community on neighbors' actions -- would be critical in helping Iraq get through this dangerous period.

IRAQ AND ITS REGIONAL DISCONTENTS

¶4. (C) In the question and answer session that followed, Zebari conceded that some neighbors -- including Syria, Iran, Turkey and Egypt, in varying degrees, were not happy with this GOI move to the UN. He insisted that the GOI welcomed a broad investigation that would focus not only on the Syrian angle, but on Iranian influence and that of other neighbors, as well as any domestic players necessary to investigate. He distinguished this request, which was voluntary, from the Chapter VII resolutions, enforced by the UNSC, which he said were imposed on Iraq.

SYRIA, OTHERS WANTS REGIME CHANGE

¶5. (C) When asked by the French ambassador, Zebari agreed that the senior official appointed by the UN "should not be Qthat the senior official appointed by the UN "should not be UNAMI head Ad Melkert," given that he already has a full range of duties in Iraq. While he felt the current GOI tactics were having some impact, making the Syrian regime nervous and cautious, he did not expect permanent behavior change to come quickly; it would be the product of sustained pressure. Sliding between hypothetical formulations, generalized descriptions of "some countries in the region," and occasional outright accusations directed at Syria, Zebari made the point that Syria has a strategic vision that calls for regime change in Iraq. It wanted a regime that would be more secular, nationalist, and under its influence, and was actively using Iraqi Baathists and other elements to destabilize Iraq. Other neighbors in the region shared this strategic vision and they were "more encouraged" by the

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situation since August 19, said Zebari. (NOTE: On the margins of the meeting, senior MFA policy advisor Farid Yasseen mentioned Saudi Arabia as another country that fell in this category, but which relied primarily on money to accomplish its goals.)

IRAN'S STRATEGIC VISION FOR IRAQ

¶6. (C) When asked if Iran shared Syria's strategic vision for Iraq, Zebari said no. He explained that while Iranian-supported elements had attacked coalition forces to embarrass and harass them, Iran's strategic calculation is different from Syria's, and based on the view that the current government in Iraq, "and the next one," would be friendly to Iran.

THE LETTER

¶7. (U) (EMBASSY TRANSLATION): "Subject of the Meeting: Convey the Iraqi Government's Shared Position to the Permanent Members of UN Security Council."
Text: "The Iraqi government made contacts with capitals about the letter of the Prime Minister to the Secretary General of the United Nations which was distributed to you for consultations.
Now our message to you is that we request the support of your governments and your understanding in pursuing the implementation of Iraq's request for the Secretary General to appoint a senior official to assess the explosions which occurred in Baghdad August 19, 2009, and the extent of foreign intervention in undermining security and stability in Iraq." (END TRANSLATION.)
HILL